DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 271 387 SO 017 443

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TITLE Japanese Education and the Development of Postwar Educational Policy, 1945-1985.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 65p.; For other studies in this series on education in Japan, see SO 017 338 and SO 017 443-460.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Comparative Education; Cultural Traits; Democracy; Economic Opportunities; Economic Progress; Economic Status; *Educational Attainment; *Educational Attitudes; *Educational Change; *Educational Philosophy; *Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; *Higher Education; Science Education; Social Values; Vocational Education; Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS *Japan; United States Study of Education in Japan

ABSTRACT

This document chronicles major developments in post World War II Japanese educational policy. The focus is mainly on the way in which world events, social structure, religion, cultural values, and official policy initiatives influenced Japanese educational practices. Developments covered in the first period, from 1868 to 1945, began with the reforms of the Meiji period. The influence of World War II and the occupation of Japan are reviewed. Educational policies which followed World War II and the accompanying occupation of Japan, including goals of democratization, demilitarization, and decentralization of government power are described. The post-occupation period, from 1950 to 1960, saw the re-creation of a centralized education ministry, a closer integration of school boards into the local governmental structure, the expansion of educational opportunities, and the reinstitutionalization of moral education. These reforms are seen as further supporting the democratization of Japanese society. The expansion of education during the 1960's and 1970's stresses how the interests of industry and the wide consensus on the need for future economic development influenced educational policy. A major focus is the spread and improvement of higher education. Reforms which took place between 1978 and the present, the shrinking of the school age population, the increase in school drop-outs, the refusal of education syndrome, and the emergence of an international youth culture are described. An extensive bibliography is included. (JDH)

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"JAPANESE EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSTWAR EDUCATIONAL POLICY, 1945-1985"

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Introduction

The appointment of an Ad Hoc Reform Council , or Rinkyoshin , on August 21, 1984 was the logical culmination to a lengthy period of concern in Japan over a set of widely perceived educational problems and the future prospects for Japanese education. The charge given to the council by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone was clear -- the council was " to consider basic strategies for necessary reforms . . . so as to secure such education as will be compatible with the social changes and cultural developments of our country." The Prime Minister went on to remind council members that "If our nation is to build up a society that is full of vitality and creativity as well as relevant to the 21st century, it is a matter of great urgency to design necessary reforms. . . ." (Provisional Council on Educational Reform, 1985:66-67).

As the 1986 deadline for the Ad Hoc Council's policy recommendations draws closer, several things are clear. Whatever the Council ultimately recommends, it will be the subject of intense interest and comment both within Japan and abroad. In addition, the problems that the recommendations are designed to alleviate are not recent ones, but have their roots in earlier

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phases of Japan's postwar educational development. Finally, this systematic attempt to institute fundamental educational reforms is not a new phenomenon in Japan. Indeed, major attempts to implement basic educational reforms occurred in the 1870's and again following World War II. In the first instance the reform movement was initiated by the new Meiji government as a means of building a modern state as quickly as possible, while in the latter case the reforms were imposed by a powerful occupation force intending to transform Japan from a military dictatorship into a democratic society. In both cases the initial sweeping reforms were followed by a more conservative reaction that served to temper the earlier changes.

Although the primary focus of this paper is on the development of postwar Japanese education, it is necessary to provide an historical context from the earlier periods in order to better understand the current reform movement and its likely future direction. Following this, however, an analysis of postwar developments will be informed by the following questions:

1. How has the transformation of Japanese education changed in response to changes in Japanese society since 1945 ?

2. What are the major characteristics of Japanese education since 1945, and how have these characteristics changed, if at all, in the postwar period ?

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3. What major educational policies have emerged from changes in educational orientation and social development in the postwar Japan ?

4. What are the major problems facing Japanese education today ?

This paper is based on the assumption that education does not take place in a vacuum, but is more-or-less an accurate reflection of the existing political, economic, social and cultural forces dominant in society. Changes which occur in education are, therefore, a reflection of these controlling forces which, for convenience's sake, will be lumped under the rubric of a society's "orientations." Thus, for example, in a society possessing a rigid social hierarchy, an emphasis on harmony and group solidarity, an intricate net of reciprocal social relations, etc. one should not be suprised to find that the system of schooling has been shaped by these characteristics. As Nathan Glazer has persuasively argued, a major reason for Japan's educational success is that the "vertical" nature of Japanese society has been transferred to other institutions, including the school, but "modified to accomodate [their] specific objectives" (Glazer, 1976 :816).

It is also recognized that formal schooling is only a part, and not always the most important part, of the broader <u>educational</u> enterprise that exists in all societies (Cremin, 1970:ix-xiii). The informal and non-formal sectors are, however,

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beyond the scope of this paper and will not, therefore, be considered.

Another important assumption underlying this paper is the contention that schooling has not been primarily responsible for the changed orientations in Japanese society since 1945, but rather that these new orientations shaped the current system of schooling in Japan.

Japanese Education, 1868-1945

Japanese education has undergone two major reforms since the Meiji Period (1868-1912). The first occurred in early Meiji (1868-1880) when a western type school system was introduced for the purpose of modernizing the nation. The Japanese approach was an pragmatic one, based on the Imperial Charter Oath of April 6, 1868 which called on the people to eschew old-fashioned ways, and insisted that "Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world." The major criterion used by the Meiji reformers was simply to borrow the best features of several western educational systems and adapt them to the Japanese situation. As a result, a highly centralized administrative structure with an emphasis on state run normal schools was borrowed from France; a system of higher education rooted in a handful of elite public universities was the German contribution; the English model of Spartan-like, character-building preparatory schools stressing moral discipline fit nicely into the Japanese context; and from

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the United States came the model for elementary education, a number of practical pedagogical approaches and an interest in vocational education.

Another important element in Japan's rush to reform was the double-edged policy of sending promising young students abroad for study while at the same time hiring foreign experts, the so-called oyatoi gaikokujin (foreign employees) as teachers and advisors until enough young Japanese could be trained to replace them. Our best estimate of the numbers of these foreign employees in Japan between 1868-1912, range from 3,000 to 6,000. As Hazel Jones suggests the latter figure is "too large if applied to foreign employees in government and perhaps too small if private foreign employees are included" (Jones, 1980:xv). In any event, these foreign educators generally served Japan well, being instrumental in introducing western educational thought, practice, textbooks and equipment into the country (Burks, 1985; Dulles, 1965; Schwantes, 1955).

From the Meiji Restoration of 1868 to about 1875, the Meiji reformers pursued modernization in a pell mell fashion. By the latter date, however, they began to recognize that things were moving too rapidly; that certain western ideas (e.g. individualism) were not well suited to the Japanese environment) and they systematically began to slow down the process. By 1880 a widespread attitude had emerged that the reforms of the previous decade had gone too far, and steps needed to be taken to recapture the essence of such traditional values as

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Confucianism which, in the view of one leading scholar, "taught that the meaning of social life lay . . . in cultivating relationships among members of society built on trust, a fundamental sense of one's humaneness, and above all, a commitment to loyal action on behalf of others." This would, its advocates insisted, "should be reintegrated as a nutritive value into modern Japanese life" (Narita, 1974: 98-99). Another student of the subject suggests that from about this time there emerged "a conscious fear of the development of critical attitudes and active attempts to repress them." In fact, Tadashi Fukutake continues, "Basic state schooling was, one might say, schooling for soldiers. Higher education was the education of officers and NCO's. Vocational schools, higher technical schools, and universities, in their graded hierarchy, were the supply system for a status-ranked society. From such an educational process conducted under full pressure from the Imperial state, one could not expect, even from university education, the development of political awareness (Fukutake, 1982: 70).

The success of the Meiji educational strategy is affirmed by former U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Edwin O. Reischauer, who concludes that this approach was "closely tailored to national needs as the leaders saw them. It created a literate mass of soldiers, workers, and housewives, ample middle-level technical skills - an a aspect of education that many of today's modernizing countries have failed adequately to appreciate - and a thin stream of highly talented young men

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emerging from the universities to occupy positions of leadership in government and society" (Reischauer, 1977:169).

A second major reform period took place immediately following World War II as a key element in the Allies determination to transform Japan from an aggressive military dictatorship into a peace loving democracy. (Nishi, 1982; Ward and Shulman, 1974). When Japan surrendered to the Allies in August of 1945, those Americans charged with planning the eventual occupation of Japan shared an essentially common view of prewar and wartime Japanese education, and the role it had played in Japan's military expansion into much of Asia and Oceania (Burkman, 1982; Borton,1967; Mayo, 1984). Since the Meiji Restoration of 1868, education was consciously used by Japan's political leaders as an instrument to advance the ends of the state, including economic development, national integration and military power and conquest.

Before and during World War II, American policymakers saw Japanese education as a conscious vehicle for carrying out the intent of the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education. This document, promulgated by the Emperor Meiji on October 30, 1890, remained the official statement of the principles underlying Japanese education until it was scrapped by the occupation authorities. The rescript gave both legal form and, perhaps more significantly, moral force to an educational system which supported the rise of militarism and ultranationalism during the late-1920's and 1930's.

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William Seabald, a career State Department officer who served as an advisor to General MacArthur during the Occupation, has written that prewar Japanese education, "had been used by the country's leaders as part of a policy of developing an obedient and subservient population. Schools had been transformed, primarily into agencies of indoctrination in militarism and ultranationalism. For many years teachers and students had drawn their inspiration from the Imperial Rescript on Education . . . , with the result that the importance and integrity of the individual were dwarfed by the growing power of the state" (Quoted in Rohlen, 1983 :63-64).

This document, perhaps the single most revealing source of prewar Japanese education's underlying ideology, set the basic contours of that educational system for almost six decades, and is so important that it deserves to be quoted at length:

> Know ye, Our subjects,
>
> Our Imperial ancestors have founded our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies

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the source of Our education. Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all, pursue learning and cultivating arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore advance public good and promote common interest; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, arise courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of our Imperial Throne coeval with heavens and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.

The Way set forth here is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by their Descendents and the subjects infallible for all ages and true in all places. It is Our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence in common with you, Our subjects, that we may all attain the same virtue (Passin, 1965: 151).

The Imperial Rescript is a key document from several

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points of view. On the one hand, it paraphrases the acceptable and highly moralistic Confucian virtues to which all loyal Japanese were expected to adhere, and sets down the principles from which much of the militaristic and ultranationalistic emphasis in education developed. Along the latter lines it clearly subordinates the individual to the good of the state and promotes unthinking acceptance of, and blind obedience to instructions from above. An Office of Strategic Services (OSS) document on Japanese education, prepared during World War II, concludes that "The attitude that education should be for the purposes of the State rather than for the liberation of the individual has permeated the entire system. Elementary school instruction has been dedicated to the development of unquestioning loyalty. The Department of Education's exclusive copyright over textbooks, held since 1903, has made it possible to intensify this process of indoctrination." The Minister of Education, in a 1941 speech, called for "the eradication of thoughts based on individualism and liberalism, and the firm establishment of a national moral standard with emphasis on service to the state" (Office of Strategic Services, n.d.:2).

The Occupation of Japan, 1945-1952

When the Emperor's representatives formally signed the instrument of surrender aboard the U.S.S. Missouri, on September 2, 1945, Japan lay numbed and prostrate before a conquering army. Her educational system was in shambles; capitulation found

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18,000,000 students idle, 4,000 schools destroyed, and only 20% of the necessary textbooks available (R.K. Hall, 1949: 2). In addition, large portions of many of those textbooks contained unacceptable nationalist propoganda which had to be removed before they were suitable for pedagogical purposes (Nishi, 1982:176-180). Finally, more than one of every three institutions of higher education lay in ruins, thousands of teachers were homeless, hungry and dispirited and many of their pupils had been moved to safer areas. In short, a functioning educational system was virtually nonexistent.

The major goals of the Occupation of Japan can be simply stated as the democratization, demilitarization and decentralization of Japanese society. The Americans recognized that a new orientation of the educational system was an indispensible element in achieving these objects, especially that of remaking Japan into a functioning democracy.

Having surrendered her sovereignty to the Allies, Japan entered a period in which the policymaking function was no longer in her hands. As an occupied nation, all Japan could hope for was that through persuasion and political skill she could at least have an influence on the educational policy that the Americans formulated and had the power to force a defeated people to implement. It was during this time that the process of transforming Japan's prewar orientations proceeded apace. This was a dual process in which the terrible scars of war led the Japanese people to acquire a strong aversion to their military

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establishment while, simultaneously, the Occupation authorities systematically dismantled the prewar institutions and structures which they saw as causing Japan's slide into the abyss of militarism and nationalism. The Japanese commitment to non-violence and peace was evidenced by the widely accepted Article 9 of the 1946 Constitution which forever renounced war as an instrument of the national policy; the emergence of the so-called "nuclear allergy" which has made discussions of national defense and American nuclear forces in Japan a politically explosive subject; and the increasingly left-of-center political ideology of intellectuals, university students and the Japan Teachers Union (Duke, 1973; THURSTON ~~Rosen~~, 1973). The experience of military dictatorship and the horrors of World War II have, over the past half-century, appeared to have been indelibly ingrained into the character of the Japanese people.

This new orientation, reinforced by surviving remnants of the prewar Japanese willingness to accept and obey instructions from above, enabled the American authorities to use the existing instruments of government to implement educational reforms. (Questions of the extent of Japanese cooperation with and/or manipulation of the American authorities are beyond the scope of this paper). The Occupation proceeded to censor textbooks, magazines, films, etc. as well as to purge teachers whose pre-Occupation activities were deemed to be either undemocratic or actively supporting the military's policies (Baerwald, 1959; Anderson, 1975:63) Thus, one of the great ironies of this period was that in encouraging the

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democratization of Japanese education, the actions of the all-powerful Occupation forces were often not democratic.

What appeared to be wrong with Japanese education, in the eyes of most American policymakers, was that it was not like the American school system. American initiated educational reforms, were, therefore, designed to help foster the conditions leading to functioning Japanese democratic and economic based on the American model. This meant that the Occupation would have to transform the prewar orientation of the Japanese into one harmonious with the goals of the United States in Japan. Prewar Japan had been characterized by an emphasis on filial piety, the perfection of moral powers, group cohesion and harmony, loyalty and obedience to the Emperor and nation, and the like.

To assist in carrying out this transformation, the First United States Education Mission, composed of twenty-seven prominent American educators, was invited to spend a month in Japan examining the educational system for the purpose of making recommendations for the reform of that system. True to their American heritage they rejected most of the elements of prewar Japanese education, and insisted on the democratization and decentralization of Japan's highly centralized enterprise into a system in which the centralized power of the powerful Ministry of Education would be broken, and local communities controlled their own educational destiny. The American reformers also suggested the dismantling of the highly differentiated multi-track system of prewar days in favor of a nine year

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compulsory single-track as part of an American-style 6-3-3-4 school ladder, along with steps designed to foster greater individuality, freedom of inquiry, the development of the "whole child", co-education, greater flexibility in the curriculum, and a radical reform of Japan's written language (Beauchamp, 1982: 175-192).

As a number of scholars, Japanese and American, have pointed out, many of these reforms, such as coeducation, comprehensive schools and local control, were deeply rooted in the American democratic model, but were dysfunctional when transported to the Japanese context. The Japanese educational authorities, however, had little choice but to officially accept the recommendations of the Mission's report and, indeed, these recommendations became the basis for a series of important educational laws implemented between 1947 and 1949. The most important of these were the Fundamental Law of Education, and the School Education Law that were promulgated in 1947 (Passin, 1965:293-304). The former represented a 180 degree change from the 1890 Imperial Rescript, declaring that "education shall aim at the full development of personality, striving for the rearing of the people sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem individual value, respect labor and have a deep sense of responsibility, and be imbued with the independent spirit, as builders of a peaceful state and society." It also established the important principle that all major educational regulations would be made by parliamentary procedure. The latter, on the other hand, established a new educational

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structure in which a 6-3-3 school ladder was created, the school leaving age was raised to 15 years, coeducation was legitimated, etc. These two basic pieces of education legislation are still the legal underpinnings of education in 1985.

By 1949 the major accomplishments of the Occupation were completed. The political and strategic imperatives of the emerging "Cold War" caused American policymakers to reassess their plans for the future of Japan and to ally themselves more closely with conservative Japanese interests (Dower, 1979: 369-470). The reforming zeal of the Americans had, thus, abated and the environment in Japan underwent an important change. As American control was withdrawn in the spring of 1952, the American reformers had succeeded in clearing away the old undemocratic structures, replacing them with ones more to their liking; they had replaced those individuals identified as hostile to democracy with Japanese who seemed committed to democratic values; they had provided the Japanese educators with new curricula, textbooks and methodologies. In short, they had given their best effort and now, as they withdrew to the sidelines, they could only hope that their best effort had been good enough.

Although Japan's military defeat and the American actions to dismantle the prewar system resulted in a fundamental change in Japan's educational orientation, and even though most Japanese supported the changes which had occurred, several of the American reforms seemed in the eyes of some, to throw the

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baby out with the bath water. As a result, when the occupation ended in 1952, a "reverse course" set in, and the Japanese reasserted their sovereignty by reversing a number of the American imposed reforms while modifying still others.

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The Post-Occupation Period, 1950-1960

April 28, 1952, the day on which the San Francisco Peace Treaty took effect, marked the official end of the American Occupation of Japan. For the first time since her formal surrender on September 2, 1945 sovereignty was returned to the Japanese government. In the six years and eight months separating these two watershed events the social and political orientation of the Japanese nation had been dramatically transformed into an essentially democratic pattern, albeit not one which was a mirror image of the American model of democracy. Most Japanese preferred the new postwar environment to that which had brought them such destruction, but there were many who felt that the Occupation reforms had gone too far and, indeed, had often done considerable violence to cherished Japanese values and traditions.

Given the new political and social orientation existing in 1952, it should not be suprising that the government undertook a careful reassessment of the recent reforms with an eye to correcting what they believed were excesses. The changes they made, however, the so called "reverse course," were by and large a conscientious effort to assist the American imposed democratization take root in Japanese soil. Looking back with the luxury of 20-20 hindsight, it appears that there did exist a need to balance the Occupation's emphasis on democracy, individualism and liberty with an understanding of what it meant

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to be a citizen of Japan and all that that implies. The government's reaction may be another illustration of the basic accuracy of Sir George Sansom's dictum that "The power and prestige of a foreign culture seem as if they would overwhelm and transform Japan, but always there is a hard, non-absorbent core of individual character which resists, and in its turn works upon the invading influence" (Sansom, 1962: 15). To put it another way, although the changes in Japanese society enabled Japan to accept the general thrust of the reforms forced upon her by American power and prestige, a "hard, non-absorbent core" of Japanese-ness converted them into something more harmonious with Japanese traditions and culture. In the long run, this was probably the only way in which the the American reforms could have been institutionalized in the Japanese context.

Education did not escape the government's reassessment, and during the post-1952 period it scrapped a number of the American initiated reforms and modified others to more closely fit traditional Japanese models. For example, the 1948 Board of Education Law, designed to implement the Occupation policy of transferring power from the centralized Ministry of Education to local communities through locally elected boards of education was abolished, and since 1956 board members have been appointed by the head of the local government with the approval of the local legislative body, thereby making the school board an integrated part of local administration.

The Occupation imposed abolition of moral education (

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shushin), seen by the Americans as a primary vehicle for inculcating ideas of racial supremacy, the righteousness of Japanese overseas expansion, and the divinity of the Emperor was viewed by many Japanese as having thrown out the baby with the bathwater, leaving public education without a spiritual backbone. In fact, in 1949, even before the Occupation ended, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida advocated the creation of an educational statement on morality that would replace the discredited Imperial Rescript. The Japanese left immediately denounced Yoshida's proposal as an attempt to reinstitute prewar thought control. The following year Teiyu Amano, then Minister of Education, provoked charges of a rebirth of militarism by proposing celebrating national holidays by raising the rising sun flag and playing the national anthem. He also echoed Yoshida's call for a new ethical code to replace the discredited Imperial Rescript. By 1958, the Ministry of Education's required "course of study" included one hour per week for moral education, called dotoku in place of the disreputable term, shushin . This reintroduction of moral education has not led to the evils predicted by critics. An American scholar, who originally opposed moral education classes, has written that after observing several lessons "I quickly overcame my bias against moral education and looked forward to each week's new drama" (Cummings, 1980: 116)

One of the Occupation's most significant acts was the legalization and even encouragement of labor unions as a means of fostering Japanese democracy. One of the fruits of this

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policy was the creation of a powerful Japan Teachers' Union (Nikkyoso) in the early days of the Occupation. Organized primarily by a minority of militant communists and socialists (the only groups to have "clean hands" following the war), the union was quickly recognized by General Headquarters. Perhaps because of the its close ties with the political opposition, and the beginnings of the cold war in the early 1950's, the conservative Ministry of Education refused to have anything to do with it, claiming that the JTU was devoted to fermenting a Communist Revolution and its members were, therefore, unfit to teach Japan's youth. A kind of knee-jerk symbiosis has existed between the JTU and the Monbusho; if one side is in favor of virtually anything, one can expect the other side to be opposed to it. Although relations between these two major educational forces have improved slightly in recent years, real understanding and cooperation are not yet on the horizon (Duke, 1973; ~~Reden~~ THURSTON, 1973).

This Japanese "counter-reformation" contradicted many of the earlier American reforms, but despite the charges of the radical left, these changes did not signal a rejection of democracy and a return to the "bad old days." It should be pointed out, however, that many of the American reforms were not always received well by the business community. Indeed, in 1952, Nikkeiren , an influential federation of some of Japan's largest industrial firms, issued its first statement on education policy that bluntly expressed the unhappiness in industrial circles with the democratically-oriented schools, and called for an

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educational system that was more closely allied to the needs of industry. In practice this meant more and better vocational courses and a higher degree of professionalization at the university level. This salvo would not be the last fired by the big guns of Nikkeiren .

Certainly big business favored much of the "reverse course," but the more important meaning of that phenomenon was that it clearly demonstrated a Japanese conviction that, if they were to have democracy (and there was widespread agreement that they would), they were determined to have a variant of it that was more-or-less consistent with their traditions and culture. As one distingushed Japanese scholar explained, "it was easy for liberty to become license," and the "incompatibility of American-style democracy with Japanese traditions was [clear], and the process of developing an amended Japanese version of democratic ideals was pushed forward" (Fukutake, 1982: 81-82). The Japanese penchant for centralization reasserted itself, but centralization is not necessarily undemocratic; indeed, one can point to France as an example of a democratic society characterized by a highly centralized bureaucracy. In addition, the study of American education amply demonstrates that, although local control may result in a greater sensitivity to local needs, it can also support racial prejudice, religious bigotry, economic discrimination, textbook censorship and other undemocratic acts. One can also make the argument, and many Japanese do, that their centralized system ensures that every child - from Okinawa to Hokkaido - enjoys "equality of

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opportunity" because of substantially equal physical facilities throughout the archipelago, a uniform curriculum administered by a single Ministry of Education, equal access to the same textbooks, teachers of relatively equal competence, and a uniform set of national standards.

There is no doubt that postwar Japan has made enormous strides in providing expanded educational opportunities for her young people. In the thirty-five years between the end of World War II and 1980, the number of students attending school in Japan increased from by over 80 %, from 15 million to over 27 million. Today, virtually all youngsters complete the nine years of compulsory education (99.98 %), and an impressive 94.2 % of these graduates go on to a non-compulsory senior secondary school. Perhaps most significantly, the Japanese have persuasively demonstrated that mass education does not have to be purchased with diluted standards. Time and time again, international achievement tests have placed the Japanese at, or close to, the top in a variety of subjects. Furthermore, in 1980, 37.4 % of the senior high school graduates attended some kind of institution of higher education.

Prior to 1945, Japanese females had very limited access to advanced education, especially that of an academic type. The secondary education alternatives that were available to them heavily favored domestic education, while university preparatory schools were a male preserve. It has only been recently that educational opportunities for women have emerged in Japan. In

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1970, for example, "the proportion of Japanese women with an education beyond high school constituted a fraction of the United States distribution, particularly among women between the ages of 35 and 44" (Coleman, 1983: 150). Today, although things have changed for the better, much remains to be done. In 1983, females outnumber males by 94.5 % to 93.1 % at the non-compulsory senior high school level, and one out of every three female graduates advances to some form of higher education, but the vast majority of these female graduates enroll in junior colleges, and most of those who attend four year schools major in English literature, home economics, etc.

Perhaps a more telling statistic that, although somewhat dated, is indicative of deeply held attitudes is contained in a 1973 government survey that "found only 14 percent of mothers wanting their daughters to have a university education, in contrast to 49 percent for sons" (Coleman, 1983: 151). Still another example of the lingering bias toward the education of women is reflected in a 1983 decision by the administration of the Kyoto Pharmaceutical University that it would give preference to male applicants. It seems that the number of young men successfully passing the entrance examination had been declining for several years and more women than usual were accepted. The university officials felt threatened by what they called the "feminization" of their institution, and sought to reverse this trend. They justified their decision on the grounds that Japanese companies overwhelmingly prefer to hire men and that the university sees no point in producing female graduates

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who will not be hired by the industry . It is clear that although Japanese women have made important educational strides since 1945, they have a long way to go to achieve equality with their brothers.

As governmental authorities turned to "fine tuning" the new system to more faithfully reflect the Japanese cultural environment, they also designed educational policies that reflected the spirit of the nation's new democratic ideology. In addition to honoring its committment to expand the net of educational opportunity more widely than ever before in Japanese history, the government was simultaneously seeking to improve the quality of the education offered to students.

Reinforcing these essentially political decisions was the reality of a postwar "baby boom" which began in 1947, after large numbers of military and civilian personnel returned from the wartime assignments overseas. The birth rate rose sharply after 1945. For example, the number births soared from 1,576,000 in 1945 to 2,718,000 in 1947. This resulted in a virtual flood of children reaching elementary school age in 1953, along with the certain knowledge that the same children would enter junior high school in 1959, senior high school in 1962, and the university in 1965.

This trend required the government to rapidly expand educational facilities systematically beginning with the

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elementary grades, and continuing through university level as the youngsters wended their way through the system. Providing the necessary facilities would have been difficult enough in normal times, but Japan still suffered from the loss of educational facilities in World War II. In addition, the problem was not only exacerbated by the great expansion in educational opportunity described earlier, but also by a significant rise in the the percentage of students continuing beyond the elementary and lower secondary levels. "The new 6-3-3-4 system established in the late 1940's gave people much easier access to higher levels of education than the old system, and an economic revival in the late 1950's followed by a period of high economic growth in the 1960's and the first half of the 1970's, made educational opportunity which had been institutionally offered feasible" (Ichikawa, 1984: 105).

As the government grappled with these problems, it also worked hard to provide the resources and teachers needed to improve the quality of education for steadily increasing numbers of students. In addition, the Mombusho has issued four five year plans, beginning in 1958, designed to address problems of class size, staffing needs and other technical issues. Since 1980, an ambitious twelve year (1980-1992) plan has been in operation. Perhaps one of the most effective activities of the Mombusho is the preparation of an official revised courses of study, which serve as guides for the various curricula. The first of these was undertaken in the late 1950's in an attempt to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of postwar education. A second

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revision occurred in 1968 and focused on providing a higher level of study in mathematics, science, etc. These decennial revisions ensure that the curriculum kept is kept up-to-date and, indeed, provide at least a partial explanation for the success of Japanese students in th nternational Survey of Educational achievement (IEA) Project.

Whereas the Occupation period had been one in which the government's role was generally restricted to implementing the reforms laid down by General Headquarters, the 1950's were characterized by Japan regaining control over her educational future. The government's freedom of action was constrained, however, by the existence of the earlier reforms and a general consensus of the Japanese people favoring the retention of a democratic system. These new political and social orientations resulted in Japanese educational policy being directed at retaining those American initiated policies which did not do violence to Japanese traditions and culture while discarding or modifying those which were dysfunctional. This resulted in a rejection of significant portions of the Occupation changes such as American style progressive education, and a return to a more traditional subject-centered education that was congruent with traditional Japanese orientations. Along similar lines there was a return to traditional forms of centralization, short circuiting the American desire for the devolution of power to the local communities, allowing the Mombusho to retain its central position in the educational enterprise. Moral education became a matter of public debate with and slowly worked its way

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back into the curriculum although in a much milder form than had existed previously. Finally the Japan Teachers' Union came into increasingly direct conflict with a conservative government after 1952, and a continuing running battle between the JTU and the Mombusho became a continuing occurrence.

Not all of this period was characterized by counter-reformation; the post-1952 Japanese government also presided over an impressive expansion of educational opportunity that was fueled by both a baby boom and the scores of new students entering schools as a result of structural changes imposed during the Occupation. Finally, the latter part of the 1950's saw the beginnings of a industry initiated demand for a greater emphasis on science, technology and vocational courses in the schools. In brief, the period of the 1950's was characterized the consolidation of many Occupation reforms, the rejection or modification of others that were dysfunctional with the unique Japanese context and the laying down of the broad outlines of educational policies that would be pursued during the 1960' and 1970's.

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Expansion in the 1960's and 1970's

No less important for Japanese education than the Occupation reforms of the immediate postwar years was the unprecedented period of high economic growth triggered by the restoration of sovereignty, and accelerated by the outbreak of the Korean War, continuing unabated until the first oil crisis of 1973. Enjoying a steady accretion of her growth rate of over 10 percent yearly (in real terms), Japan experienced rapid changes not only in her economy, but also in the political and social arena. Changes of this magnitude invariably cause changes in a society's educational orientation and so it was in Japan's case. It was not so much that the democratizing themes of the Occupation were forgotten. Indeed, various segments of the population would not allow that to happen, but after years of economic hardship there was a wide consensus on the need for economic reconstruction. Educational policy during the 1960's and much of the 1970's was consciously designed to foster economic development. Indeed, there is little doubt that since the middle of the 1950's the interests of industry have been extremely influential in shaping educational policy.

Almost immediately after Japan's reassertion of her sovereignty in 1952, the recognition of a serious shortage of scientific and technical manpower emerged as a major educational problem. Major special interest groups, such as Nikkeiren (Japan Federation of Employers), had begun to aggressively urge

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the government to play a major role in overcoming the problem. Industry spokesmen generally agreed on the need for the "functional differentiation of the higher educational structure, and . . . increased specialization in courses and the graduation of more science and engineering specialists (Pempel, 1978:163).

There had existed in prewar Japan a system of single faculty technical schools providing sub-professional training (roughly comparable to that offered by American junior colleges) to those either unable to pass the university entrance examination, or without the necessary economic means to attend a university. Students could enter technical schools directly from the lower middle school and graduate with certification in a wide variety of technical fields, including drafting, accounting, architecture, engineering and, in some cases, even as a qualified doctor or dentist. Although such graduates did not enjoy the same level of professional status as a university graduate, "they provided the important battalions that filled the growing needs of Japanese industry" (Passin, 1965:97).

Many major firms were nostalgic for the prewar multitrack system which had enabled them to make "use of a status system based on the academic background of their employees. Within companies one found multiple tiers and compartments divided along school-affiliation lines. The school one had been graduated from would determine one's type of job within the organization and the highest position one could hope to reach." In addition, there were complaints from industry

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about the quality of graduate entering the work force. Viewed from this perspective, the postwar reforms had been a disruptive force within corporate culture. As the new system's considerable strengths began to be appreciated, however, the corporate world "began to use the system to their advantage." They began, for example, "using the rankings into which they new schools were eventually classified," and "a hierarchy among universities took shape in line with the caliber of each university's student body, and companies shifted their internal organization to match the structure of the university hierarchy" (Amano, 1974: 14-15). This reality was not lost on high school graduates who, quite naturally, saw their futures best served by attending a university in the upper reaches of the new hierarchy. This, in turn, reinforced and expanded the importance of university entrance examinations (Beauchamp, 1978: 543-560; Cummings,1980:206-234; Rohlen,1983:77-110; Shimahara, 1979:77-126).

In an extraordinary policy statement, issued shortly after assuming office as Prime Minister in 1960, Hayato Ikeda announced his intention of doubling Japan's national income in a 10 year period. This, in effect, required an annual growth rate of about 7 percent. In the late 1950's Japan's share of the world gross national product stood at about 3 percent, but by the time of the first oil crisis of 1973 it had grown to a remarkable 10 percent. Japan had, in fact, achieved an average annual growth rate of about 11 percent between 1961 and 1969, attaining Ikeda's ambitious target in just 5 years. By 1969

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Japan's gross national product was 3.7 times that of 1960.

Increases in per capita income kept pace with this dizzying trend and soon Japan's standard of living exceeded historic levels. Per capita income, which had stood at barely $200 in the early 1950's, rocketed to $2,300 per year in 1972 (Burks, 1981:157). Several important consequences flowed from Japan's new found economic cornucopia, including increased social mobility, a quickened flow of young people from rural to urban centers, a declining birth rate, and an unprecedented expansion of employment opportunities. An increasing demand for formal education reflected these economic and social developments and educational officials were hard pressed to keep up with it.

In 1957, the recently established Economic Planning Agency, the coordinating body for overall governmental economic planning, had issued a long range plan establishing guidelines for economic development, and education's role in achieving it. The Ministry of Education contributed a 5 year plan designed to accomodate 8,000 new university places annually for science and technology students and by 1960 was close to achieving its target. Prime Minister's Ikeda's scheme to double the national income in a decade, however, required the production of an additional 170,000 scientists and engineers. The Ministry of Education planned to meet this need with a 7 year plan that added 16,000 places annually, but it was subsequently replaced with a 4 year plan adding 20,000 new places yearly.

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Perhaps, the single most influential educational document of this period was the so-called "Report on the Long-Range Educational Plan Oriented Toward the Doubling of Income." Prepared by a technical subcommittee of the Economic Planning Agency's Economic Council in 1960, this document stressed the importance of education as an investment in developing human resources. It argued for the need for more and better science and technical education to meet industry's need for skilled workers, and intoned that "Future progress in economics and social welfare depends largely on the effective use of the human resources of the nation" (Kobayashi, 1976:93). It insisted, in the view of one close observer, on the necessity of "extending upper secondary education to most adolescents, shaping the motivational and cognitive orientations of adolescents toward a complex society through upper secondary education, and training talented human resources to compete economically in the international domain" (Shimahara, 1979: 133). As we have seen throughout this paper, since the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the Japanese government has been consistent in using education as a vehicle to achieve larger national goals.

In 1962 the government passed legislation creating a system of 19 technical colleges, designed "to train [middle level] technicians with well-rounded general knowledge and a thoroughly specialized knowledge in technology" (Anderson, 1974:201). These institutions, offering a five year curriculum

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in a variety of industrial (and sometimes merchant marine) studies, is open to graduates of the lower secondary school. As of May, 1983 there were 62 technical colleges with a total enrollment of 47,245 students, of whom 97.2 percent were male (Ministry of Education, 1984:13).

This law, along with subsequent actions of the Ministry of Education, resulted in a highly differentiated system of technical education. The universities, at the apex of this system, provided both undergraduate and graduate education for scientists and high level technical personnel. The elite nature of this arrangement can be seen in the decision to concentrate advanced courses in a handful of important universities. The technical schools described above were designed to train the large numbers of middle level technicians needed to operate a sophisticated scientific and technical economy. In addition, specialized technical high schools, and high quality technical courses in general high schools, produced large numbers of lower level technicians. Finally, there was created a variety of miscellaneous schools outside the formal system of education providing technical education. Many of these provide short term courses in a wide variety of fields, including electronics, etc. There was also developed a sophisticated set of public and private industrial training centers to train skilled workers. The School Education Law of 1961 allowed, under certain circumstances, for work done in them to be credited toward high school graduation. This differentiation, clearly, served the interests of those industrial interests who, as early as 1952

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severely criticized the new educational system.

In the decade between 1960 and 1970 the government had succeeded in more than doubling the number of university science and engineering faculties and increasing the number of science and engineering graduates by more than 2.5 times. This, however, tells only part of the story. "In 1960, 18.2 percent of the total [university] student enrollment was in the fields of science and engineering; by 1975 this figure was up to 23.2 percent. Even more significant, within the national universities, where the government efforts were most direct, the figure rose from 24 percent to 33 percent in these fields." (Pempel, 1978:180)

Early on educational planners had identified secondary education as a critical factor in human resource development and, although recognizing the long term need for overall improvement in general secondary education, they opted to give priority to science and technical education in the short term. The same study that called for the training of 170,000 scientists and engineers also insisted on the need for 439,000 technical school graduates in the same period. This goal could not, of course, be met without a substantial increase in the number of technical teachers available so a number of temporary 3 year teacher training institutes, tied to 9 major national universities, were created. In the next 7 years 800 future teachers were admitted to these schools (Ichikawa, 1984: 115).

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As noted earlier, the postwar period was one of quantitative expansion but the need for a similar qualitative improvement remained. The amount of public money devoted to education rose from 159,818 million yen in 1950 to 372,006 million yen in 1955; to 1,057,070 million yen in 1963 and to 5,060,245 million yen in 1973. This money went not only toward providing better teachers, but also better facilities (including laboratories and libraries), smaller classes, and in-service training for teachers. (Ministry of Education, 1976:73).

One of the most interesting, and successful examples of this latter element ideas was the creation of a system of Science Education Centers in each prefecture. "In them, with a combination of local initiative and resources and substantial National Government assistance, teachers at all precollege levels received inservice training in the use of the latest materials and methods for science and mathematics teaching" (Anderson, 1974: 98).

Increasing differentiation was also a characteristic of higher education following the Occupation period. Government policy has assigned the fulfillment of manpower needs to the national sector, while the private sector has been encouraged to meet increased social demand for higher education. Thus, public money is invested in the public sector's responsibility of fueling economic development, but not significantly in satisfying the increased social demand for higher education that as arisen in the past three decades. In the 15 years between

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1960 and 1975, only 9 new national universities were established while, in the same period, 165 private institutions were founded ! Today, 3 out of every 4 Japanese seeking higher education fulfill their ambition in the private sector.

Since 1956, the government has also differentiated within national universities; the newly established postwar universities (many upgraded from the old higher schools) operate on an American style course system, whereas the former 7 imperial universities (perhaps the most prestigious in Japan), and a handful of others, have retained the prewar chair system. These are the universities which have received the bulk of research funds, higher salaries, better equipment, etc. They also have "attached" research institutes and are charged with both a teaching and research function.

A potent combination of the postwar baby boom, the nation's increasing affluence and the recognition that an individual's and the nation's future were intimately intertwined to an emerging "information society," led to the widespread acceptance of higher education as a prerequisite to maintaining Japan's newly acquired affluence. This reality sent increasing numbers of high school graduates through the narrow gates of the universities. The gate keepers, however, insisted that those admitted first demonstrate their merit by successfully passing rigorous entrance examinations (Beauchamp,1978:243-260). Ezra Vogel, best known for his positive view of Japanese accomplishments, had earlier suggested that "No single event,

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with the possible exception of marriage, determines the course of a young man's life as much as entrance examinations, and nothing, including marriage, requires as many years of planning and hard work" (Vogel, 1965:40).

A bizzare, but true example of the kind of horror stories associated with entrance examinations is recounted by Ronald Dore. In describing how a preoccupation with these examinations at higher educational levels tends to create a "backwash" into the lower levels of the educational system, he describes its logical conlusion in " a pre-pre-kindergarden which was reported in 1970 to have failed to devise adequate tests for 2 year olds and decided to test their mothers instead" (Dore,1976:49). Although an admittedly extreme case, there are few Japanese who would be overly suprised upon hearing about this case. Thomas Rohlen characterizes this kind of "obsession with entrance examinations" as " a dark engine powering the entire school system" and, if anything, he understates the case. (Rohlen, forthcoming).

Most Japanese seem to think that there is entirely too much emphasis placed on examinations, but very little has been done to change this situation. What are the obstacles preventing a chnage that most thoughtful people seem to favor ? At least three possible answers, in no particular order of importance, suggest themselves: (1) a deeply ingrained Confucian legacy, (2) too few places for too many applicants, and (3) powerful vested interests.

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The Confucian legacy argument stresses the efficacy of memorizing the classics, and a number of scholars have pointed out how deeply inbred this approach seems to be in the Japanese psyche. One distingushed student of Japan, with many years of experience in that country, has written that Japan's "ferocious race and competition for the best possible places at the best universities, is simply the ancient Chinese system of state examinations to acede to the class of jugakusha (literati) in a modern context. Today one may gloss Karl Marx instead of Mencius, or write an essay on spherical trigonomtery instead of defining filial piety, but the terms, rules and outcomes of the game have changed very little" (Maraini, 1971:27). Whoever learns the most facts and best develops test taking skills is most likely to be successful. A criticism made by an American teacher in Japan during the 1870's, is still valid today. William Elliot Griffis, a Rutgers graduate, while serving the Meiji Emperor, reproached Japanese teachers who saw it their "chief duty . . . to stuff and cram the minds . . . of pupils" with nothing but information (Beauchamp, 1976:48).

The entrance examinations of 1986 are still shaped by this attitude, but it may not be quite as absurd as it sounds. There is a widely held view among many Japanese that the value of entrance examinations is not in the information memorized and regurgitated upon command, but rather in the intense, difficult and often lonely experience of preparing for those examinations. This, we are told, strengthens one's character and moral fiber

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and prepares the individual for the arduous challenges lying ahead. Interestingly enough, Thomas Rohlen lends supports to this view when he suggests that although intelligence is needed to pass the exams, "self discipline and willpower are equally essential" (Rohlen, forthcoming).

A second obstacle to reforming the examination system lies in the powerful vested interests which might suffer economically if significant changes were to be made in existing arrangements. A visit to virtually any book shop in Tokyo will illustrate the profitability of the current examination system to publishers. These book shops are usually crowded with students of all ages who flock to the shelves appropriate to their needs. Shelves are conspicuously marked with signs such as "For Secondary School Entrance Preparation." Other shelves contain such provocative titles as The Complete Study Guide for Passing "X" University Entrance Examinations , or English Vocabulary Most Likely to Appear on the Entrance Examination for "Y" University , etc. Pamphlets containing past examinations and sample examinations are also found in abundance. All of this is, of course, big business for the publishers.

In addition, most students preparing for entrance examinations attend voluntary, and often expensive supplementary or cram schools. Many of these are part of major nationwide chains, and have made many an entrepreneur affluent. There are also the fat fees charged students for the privilege of taking a university's entrance examination; fees which can make a

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considerable difference to the financial health of many private institutions. These are not the only ones to benefit from the examination system which is so widely criticized. Manufacturers of specially designed student desks and worktables, desk lamps, etc. would also suffer economically from as weakening of ther examination system.

Ironically, many of the victims of this system would also be victims should entrance examinations lose their centrality to the Japanese educational experience. One of the easiest and often lucrative sources of income for Japanese students who have successfully entered university is to tutor students preparing to take the examinations themselves.

A third obstacle to examination reform is a simple one. Over 90 percent of the relevant age cohort graduate from high school in Japan, and almost two-thirds of them have taken a college preparatory curriculum. "There were," in 1980, "590,000 places in higher education available and about 636,000 seniors applyin." At first glance, this appears to be a reasonably close fit but this overlooks another 200,000 applicants, called ronin , a reference to the masterless samurai of feudal days. These high school graduates from earlier years had failed in earlier attempts to enter their university of choice, and rather than admit failure continued their studies in preparation for another try at the examination.

Nagai Michio, a former minister of education and

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currently an editorial writer for the Asahi shimbun , has concluded that "the overly fast growth in student population caused qualitative deterioration in the levels that expanded with particular rapidity. This was most conspicuous in the sphere of higher education, as evidenced by the financial hardships of private schools, the acceptance of more students than could be officially registered, the admission of students through shady behind-the-scenes procedures and the rigidity of the self-management of national and public universities. Such issues of qualitative deterioration have kept the government occupied since the 1970's" (Nagai, 1986:16) Two important unintended consequences of this rapid expansion have been that it has reinforced the existing hierarchy of universities as well as the entrance examination system.

Expanded enrollments for a limited number of university places inevitably meant increased competition for those relatively few places that were perceived to be of the greatest value. Thus, with more and more applicants striving to attend a handful of famous national universities, and an even smaller number of prestigious private universities, the existing hierarchy was not only maintained but also strengthened. This trend also reinforced the power of the entrance examination system, and not only for its importance as a sorting device. Every student who takes the university entrance examination, and most take the examination for more than one institution, pays a fee ranging from about $40-60. Thus, the money starved private sector came to depend on the income to help meet their operating

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expenses.

Indeed, one of the great ironies of Japan's democratic system of higher education is that private universities must charge much higher tuition fees than do the state supported national and prefectural universities. This results in a situation that is almost the complete reverse of the American experience. The prestigious national universities, whose graduates make up a disproportionate share of the nation's political and economic leadership, charge only nominal fees and, as a result, are not only able to select the best students but draw them from all of society's economic strata. A suprisingly large number of students from society's lowest fifth economically pass the entrance examinations and are able to attend the top universities. Students attending private schools, on the other hand, are often from the most affluent economic groups.

Another important, even spectacular, development of Japanese education was the campus unrest of the 1960's. Although the Occupation authorities had encouraged free speech and academic freedom on university campuses, the environment following Japan's independence in 1952 had changed considerably. The American relationship with Japan was more informed by our need for Japanese support in the Cold War, and our perceived need to support a conservative government supportive of American military policy. It should not be suprising that Japan's academic orientation also changed in response to this event.

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This changed academic environment of the post Occupation years was one in which students found the realities of university life disappointing. After working exceptionally hard for many years to pass the examination to a prestige university, the reality of large classes, rigidly prescribed curricula, disinterested lecturers, seldom-seen professors and a byzantine bureaucratic structure clashed with their image of a university. The postwar educational system and its left-of-center teaching force had encouraged students to question both society's materialism and the political assumptions underlying the conservative government's apparent repudiation of the antiwar constitution, and attempts to return Japan to a more authoritarian society.

Student radicals were an important part of the 1945-1960 intellectual ferment in Japan, but during the 1960's their numbers proved to be the heart of the great student protest that shook the nation over the ratification of the revised U.S.-Japan Security Treaty of June 1960. The movement continued on, using the American intervention in Vietnam as an emotional focus and culminated in the great Tokyo University protest of 1968. This event marked the high point of the student movement, and student occupation of Todai's physical facilities not only forced the university's closure for several months, but was directly responsible for suspending the 1969 entrance examinations.

The government of Prime Minister Eisaku Sato accepted

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the challenge and rammed through the Diet a "Bill for Emergency Measures of University Administration," in August of the same year. The significance of this bill, which broke the back of the student movement, was that it gave university presidents and, if necessary, the minister of education extraordinary powers to supersede the authority of the faculty, suspend teaching and research functions, etc. Despite spirited opposition from those supporting traditional faculty autonomy, and although it was never applied, the mere existence of this legislation changed the academic environment and the traditional relationship between government and university. The result was that with occasional exceptions, campus unrest subsided and the student movement broke up into increasingly rival factions, each claiming to be more ideologically pure than their opponents. They still visited violence upon one another, but the challenge to the state had successfully met.

Somewhat like the aerodynamics of the gooney bird, the marvel of Japanese higher education is not perform as well as critics would like, but that it works at all. Nathan Glazer's generalized characterization of Japanese education seems to be most applicable to higher education. Seemingly puzzled, Glazer has noted that: "The basic paradox of Japanese education is that underfunded . . . , devoid of any marked evidence of innovation [and] sharply criticized for its enormous emphasis on examinations, under attack from business for the quality of its college graduates, with limited research facilities, and a modest system of graduate education, torn by conflict between an

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alienated and radicalized teaching force in the elementary and secondary schools and a firmly conservative Ministry of Education, characterized by a college and university intelligentsia most of whom are opposed to the national government and unsympathetic to the emphasis on economic growth - it manages nevertheless to educate a labor force that serves the needs of Japanese business, industry and government" (Glazer, 1976:821). Why such a system is "successful" can only be answered by pointing to Japan's unique cultural context. Every nation defines the functions that its schools will serve through a political process, but the specific shapes of these functions is a ~~meter~~ matter of cultural particularism. Such a system, in other, words, can exist only in Japan.

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The Third Major Reform Period, 1978-Present

The late 1970's and early 1980's served as a "run up" period to Japan's most recent educational reform movement. In the early 1970's, several important reports calling for educational reforms of various types stirred widespread discussion among thoughtful Japanese and contributed to the ferment that resulted in the appointment of the Ad Hoc Reform Council, or Rinkyoshin in 1984. The first of these early documents, published in 1970, was the Ministry of Education's Educational Standards in Japan which provided a comparative framework within which to evaluate Japan's educational achievements. This was soon followed by a report of one of the Ministry's advisory organs, the Central Council for Education, which caused a considerable stir and provoked the Japan Teachers' Union to undertake its own study which they published in 1975.

The Central Council for Education document took a swipe at both conservative apologists of the existing system and the radical Japan Teachers' Union when it warned that "Education is rapidly falling behind the times because vested interests protect the status quo, because idealists oppose reforms without paying attention to their actual contents, and because much time is spent wastefully on the discussion of reforms which have no possibility of being implemented" (Ministry of Education, 1972:2). The report advocated "long-range fundamental policies

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and measures for developing the educational system, basing these proposals on an examination of the educational system's achievements over the past twenty years and on its understanding of the system of education appropriate for the years to come in which rapid technological innovations and national and international changes are anticipated" (Ministry of Education, 1972). The then Minister of Education, Michita Sakata, was impressed enough by this analysis to refer to it as a plan "for the third major educational reform in Japan's history" (Mainichi Daily News, June 12, 1971: 8).

Among its proposals, all of which carried hefty price tags, were extending free public education to 4 and 5 year olds; providing teachers with large salary increases; allowing teachers more time to teach by shifting paper work to an expanded clerical staff; expanding special education programs; increasing subsidies to private universities; and others along similar lines. One could probably characterize this report as recognizing that educational expansion had run its course, and there was now a need to move in the direction of improving the quality of education. As was to be expected reactions to specific proposals depended upon whether one's ox was being gored or not.

Still another important document feeding the reform debate was the Organization for Economic Organization and Development (OECD) analysis of japan's educational policies. Falling back on its traditional practice of actively seeking outside advice, Japan invited the Paris-based OECD to send an

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expert team to advise it on future directions. The OECD report, which, on balance, probably had the clearest view of Japan's educational problems. The OECD praised the role played by education in the nation's industrial development, but strongly criticized the the conformist nature of the Japanese system, overcentralized control and an overemphasis on standardization in the name of egalitarianism. Instead it recommended that the time seemed to be ripe "for some practical measures aimed at the development of students' personalities through a more flexible and less pressured scheme of education, with more free time, more curricular freedom, more diversity in extra-curricular activities and more co-operation among pupils. The time may have come," the OECD examiners continued, "to devote more attention to such matters as co-operation , in addition to discipline and competition, and creativity , in addition to receptivity and imitation" (OECD, 1971:67).

Finally, after several years of careful study, the Council on Education Reform of the Japan Teachers' Union, published its own view of the correct path to educational reform. Arguing that Japanese education "is circumscribed" by the government's "high economic growth policy nationally, and Security Treaty setup with the United States internationally," the JTU report suggests that this has resulted in "environmental destruction, soaring prices, housing problems, [a] traffic mess and energy crisis" (Japan Teachers' Union, 1975:30).

While the reform ferment of the early 1970's was at its

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height, Japan was hit by the first oil crisis in 1973. As a result of this international economic dislocation, Japan's economy sputtered to a virtual halt and, for a brief period, experienced a negative growth rate. After this sharp decrease in the growth rate, which had averaged 9.1 percent between 1959-1973, to a mere 4.0 percent between 1974-1980, the government was hard put to provide the resources needed by the education sector and, indeed, has had to find ways to reduce its financial support.

For the reverse of many of the reasons that educational enrollments expanded rapidly during the economic boom of the 1960's, the system began to contract after 1973. The birth rate has dropped sharply in recent years and there appears to be no good reason to anticipate a turnaround in the near future. The school age population has been decreasing since 1979 at the kindergarten level, and since 1981 at the lower elementary level, and this negative wave is gradually making its way through the entire system. Attendance rates among school age children in the noncompulsory sector have stabilized since the 1970's, suggesting that demand may have peaked. Further, "Japan's birth rate for 1980 equaled the record low level for 1966" and, according to a government spokesman, "the proportion of women of childbearing age will decline during the next four or five years" (Japan Times, February 26, 1981:2). Also, the percentage of Japan's under 15 population decreased from 22.3 percent in 1984 to 21.8 percent in 1985, which represents 105.3 boys for every 100 girls (Mainichi Daily News, May 5, 1985:12).

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Recent reports based on hard data collected and analyzed by the government has concluded that Japan's population of aged people is rapidly growing and in 1984, the number of people aged 65 or over reached 9.9 percent as compared with 5 percent in 1950. By the year 2000 it is projected that Japan will rank first in the world as the nation with the highest percentage of old people. This "graying" phenomenon is analyzed by governmental sponsored research which indicates "that by the year 2001, there will be one citizen 65 or over for every three productive citizens (aged 15 to 64). At present the ratio is one to seven" (Japan Times, September 15, 1985:2).

The educational implications of this trend are not difficult to see. Japan is now paying the price in economic and social consequences for her rapid demographic transition after, World War II, from a country with high death and birthrates to one with low mortality and fertility. The aging phenomenon confronts the society in general, and educational planners and policy makers in particular, with a number of problems. One possible scenario is raising the retirement age, enabling workers to stay on the job longer and reducing the openings for youths who are anxious to enter the labor force. Having more older people in jobs may also serve to decrease productivity at a time when higher productivity is needed to meet increased foreign competition. Finally, it appears certain that the nation's medical bills will increase substantially and the social implications of all of the above are not easy to predict.

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Although Japan's commitment to education as an escalator for success is still very high, cracks in that commitment are beginning to appear. Professor Ikuo Amano of Tokyo University presents a persuasive argument in which he refers to a "crisis of structuration." Amano argues that postwar Japan was successful in creating a society that was both egalitarian and mobile, but since the slowdown of the economy after the oil crisis of 1973, opportunities for mobility have been significantly reduced. He believes that the Occupation's attempt to dismantle the prewar hierarchial system of higher education failed, and that a stable hierarchy of high schools, dominated by the relatively few serving as feeder schools to the top universities, has emerged. "The opportunities to the top universities are virtually monopolized by the top high schools," he writes, and graduates of these top schools tend to secure jobs leading to the elite positions in society. In the earlier stage of rapid expansion of secondary and higher education, Amano contends, there existed a healthy competition, but as a result of the kinds of changes described above the number of places in elite universities has decreased, and the number of desirable jobs available upon graduation are fewer. Although it is still true that a majority of young people continue to play this game, there are increasing numbers who are unwilling to participate

Big business in Japan has also contributed to this situation as a result of their predilection for recruiting new

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employees from a select group of universities. This causes a downward pressure which distorts pre-university education. One cannot, after all is said and done, blame children and their parents for following the only real path to economic success in Japanese society. They search with a relentless persistence for whatever experience that will give them an "edge" in the great competition for educational certification.

A recent study by Thomas Rohlen tends to support the general thrust of Amano's argument. The former's analysis suggests "a trend toward a greater role for family factors in educational outcomes," pointing out that in the early 1960's there was a much broader range of applicants to elite national universities, and "little relationship between income and success. Private universities . . . , on the other hand, were filled primarily by students from families in the upper half of the income scale. By the mid-1970's, a significant shift was perceptible with fewer and fewer students from poor families entering the elite universities. A major reason [for this] is the rising significance of privately purchased advantages in the preparation process - namely, juku and elite private high schools" (Rohlen, forthcoming).

Amano's assertion that most Japanese youths continue to play the competition game is undoubtedly accurate but, for the first time, an increasing number of young people are dropping out of that game. In the past one of the things that distingushed Japanese schools from their American counterparts

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was their miniscule number of dropouts. In 1983, the latest year for which figures are currently available, 111,531 students of public and private senior high schools in Japan dropped out, an increase of 5.2 percent over the preceding year. These figures constituted only 2.4 percent of all senior high school student. This figure is quite low, especially when compared to the United States where 23 percent of senior high school students dropout before graduation. What is troubling, however, is that the Japanese figure has shown an increase every year since 1974 when relevant statistics were first collected (Japan Times, April 7, 1985:12; Asahi Shimbun, April 5, 1985:4).

One of the most interesting dimensions of this phenomenon is the so-called "school refusal syndrome," which, in the view of the Ministry of Education, is caused by "the rapidity of social change, the proliferation of the nuclear family, loss of community feelings, affluence and urbanization." Another view, however, "blames the school system which is theoretically designed so that all children of the same group stay at the same level and work at the same pace." When reality intrudes on this pollyanish assumption, however, the result is "great strain on the slower children" (Locke, forthcoming). These children's complaints of physical ailments that keep them home from school is neither truancy nor delinquency, but "a cry of silence" against the terrible pressures placed upon them by an unyielding system.

Others see the problems emerging in today's Japan as

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nothing more than what they call "advanced nation disease" (senshinkoku-byo), i.e. the inevitable, if alarming, results of modern industrial society - "increases in the rates of divorce, juvenile crime, school violence and other social ills associated with countries like the United States" (Hurst, 1984:10). It is undeniable that school violence, although still a minor problem when compared to that in the United States, is seen by most Japanese as simply unimaginable. The actions of this still tiny minority has shocked adult Japan because "their behavior violates the most fundamental code of Confucian-influenced traditional educational values - namely, respecting and obeying teachers" (Nishimura, 1985:19).

There is no doubt that the socio-economic environment of contemporary Japan is very different from that of a decade ago. Young people today are growing up in an affluence that is in stark contrast to that of previous generations. They are living in a more universal culture; the music which they listen to on their Walkman is the same as their counterparts in Dusseldorf or Detroit hear. They are sensitive to changing youth culture trends abroad, and it is not uncommon for them to have travelled overseas. They spend much of their time shopping for the latest fashions, playing video games and even drive automobiles in increasing numbers. In summary, the consumer orientation orientation of young people in the late 1980's is a far cry from that of the 1960's youth. Whereas politically active students a quarter of a century ago were committed to idealistic goals and were intensely interested in building what they perceived to be

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a better society; and a majority of those in the 1970's worked hard to become "salarymen" and share in the nation's economic prosperity, today's youth pursue personal pleasure with a single-minded devotion reminiscent of their older brother's loyalty to his company.

The combination of a rigid and inflexible educational system, along with this new orientation of students, has led not only to an increase in dropouts (as described above), but also a great increase in school violence. For example, the first half of 1983 saw a 26 percent increase over violent school incidents in 1982. A bewildering increase of violence against teachers occurred and, to the suprise of many, more and more females are becoming violent; the National Police Agency reported that in 1984 almost one out of every five youngsters taken into custody by the police was a female (Mainichi Daily News, December 30, 1984:12).

Both 1983 and 1984, however, saw a slight decline in school violence according to NPA reports, but that violence which occurred has been characterized by authorities as more "vicious" than in the past; indeed the NPA recorded an increase "in such crimes as kidnapping, arson, and assaults by minors." (Mainichi Daily News, December 30, 1984:12). The category showing the greatest increase, however, is that of <u>ijime</u> , or school "bullying" and both the vernacular and English-language press has been filled with reports, editorials and letters to the editor describing it and analyzing its causes. It has become

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so serious a problem that the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department has recently created "a special unit for taking in to public custody tormentors in school bullying cases." They report that in the period between November 1-18, 1985 they received 40 calls from victims and, "14 [of them] were taken up as criminal cases." The complaints included inflicting bodily injuries, blackmailing, being burnt with cigarette butts and a cigarette lighter, forcing victims to drink large quantities of sour milk, poking hot needles under a victim's fingernails and forcing them to eat insects, etc. (Japan Times, November 19, 1985:3). Another recent article reports that a significantly large group of children "who are apparently victims of bullying at schools have been admitted to . . . a mental hospital for children in Tokyo." The hospital reports that "many admitted children not only refuse to go to school but also show symptoms of obsessional neurosis . . . out of fear of bullying" (Mainichi Daily News, november 13,1985:13).

It is important to understand that, as disturbing as such uncivilized behavior may be, bullying is a tragic phenomenon that occurs at schools in all countries and, indeed, it is nothing new in Japan (Murakami, 1985:407). In fact, one cannot be sure that its practice today is of greater magnitude than in the past. The argument can be made that because of changes in society, bullying and school violence it now regularly reported whereas in the past it went unreported for a variety of reasons. Donald Roden argues, for example, describes how in the elite prewar higher schools upper classmen

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"customarily intimidated" new students and "any sign of annoyance could lead to more severe forms of harassment." This behavior was not described as bullying, however, but merely as "initiation." More serious were the so-called "welcome storm" (kangei sutomu) in which new students "would be attacked in their sleep by a roving band of upperclassmen," while terrified they "quivered in huddled masses" (Roden, 1980:104-105). This is not intended to dismiss the current furor over school bullying, merely to suggest that it is nothing new.

There are a number of other issues having relevance for the policy process, but lack of space precludes a discussion of them. There is little doubt, however, that the most important policy issues include the examination system, centralized control over the educational system, the role of education in fostering economic development, and the knotty problem of how to reform Japanese education to meet the challenges of the 21st century while, at the same time, taking care that reforms take a form that is harmonious with Japanese traditions and values. If the two previous major reforms, in early Meiji and following World War II, are any guide we can expect reforms of a rather sweeping nature to be made in the next few years, to be followed shortly by a period of reflection in which modifications of the original reforms are made to bring them into closer conformity with the realities of Japanese life.

One of the major differences between the 1980's and the two earlier reform experiences is that in both the Meiji and the

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Occupation periods there were foreign models available that everyone agreed were worthy of emulation. The foreign models, whether English, French, German or American, were models with which their creators were reasonably satisfied. Today, however, there is no foreign model which stands out as an obvious candidate for adaptation. Virtually all of the countries to which Japan has traditionally looked for educational ideas are themselves engaged in reform efforts to salvage inadequate educational systems. Can Japanese reform creativity cope with this new situation ?

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